

Remarks

Claims 12-25 are pending and in condition for allowance. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the outstanding rejections in view of the amendment above and the following remarks.

Applicant has amended each pending independent claim to clarify that the plug includes both a preformed mass (i.e., body) and a plurality of ridges formed outwardly of and extending about the outermost periphery of the preformed mass. Applicant believes this clarification fully addresses the Examiner's concerns regarding "ridges" and "outermost periphery" as stated in the Office Action, as well as clearly distinguishes the claims over the cited references. As stated in Applicant's specification at page 14, lines 7-10 and page 25, lines 4-7, such ridges are useful for allowing the plugs to interlock with surrounding cartilage, bone and/or each other.

In contrast, Jansson et al. describes replacement structures for bones and cartilage having a number of regularly ordered rodlets. Basing our response on the drawings, English abstract, and available Derwent information, it appears that, among other deficiencies, Jansson et al. does not teach a plurality of ridges formed outward of and extending about the outermost periphery of its body as presently claimed and shown, for example, in Applicant's Figures 4 and 7. Since Jansson et al. does not teach each limitation of the claimed invention, Applicant respectfully requests this rejection be withdrawn.

Further, the rejections under sections 102 and 103, both based solely on Oka et al., are also respectfully traversed. Oka et al. describes an articular cartilage replacement that has fiber meshes attached to a metal foil. Basing our response on the drawings and available Derwent information, it appears that, similar to Jansson et al., and in addition to other deficiencies, Oka et al. (e.g., Figure 4, lower portion) does not teach a plurality of ridges formed outward of and extending about the outermost periphery of the main body. At its closest, Oka et al. describes beam-like protrusions formed on a fiber mesh to increase the force of adhesion to the bone. Accordingly, since Oka et al.

does not show each element of the claimed invention, Applicant respectfully requests these rejections be withdrawn.

The rejections under sections 102 and 103, both based solely on Stone et al., are also respectfully traversed. Stone et al. discusses a cartilage device 10 and a rigid base component 20. As shown in Stone's Figure 4A, the outermost periphery of the device is the outer surface about cartilage device 10. This surface is smooth and does not include any ridges. Accordingly, in addition to other deficiencies, Stone et al. does not teach a plurality of ridges formed outward of and extending about the outermost periphery of its body. Contrary to the presently claimed invention, the structure shown and described in Stone et al. would not be able to interlock with similar structures because it lacks ridges as presently claimed. Accordingly, because Stone et al. does not show each element of the claimed invention, Applicant respectfully requests these rejections be withdrawn.

In view of the above remarks, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of all rejections is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge payment of any additional fees under or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 06-1910.

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Respectfully submitted,



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